

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4, 5, and 7-16 are pending in the above-captioned application. Claims 2, 3, and 6 have been previously cancelled. Claim 16 has been added. Claims 1 and 12 have been amended. Claims 1 and 12 are in independent form.

Specification

Applicants have submitted a new abstract of the disclosure. Applicants have also instructed the Examiner to cancel the previously submitted abstract of the disclosure. Additionally, the specification has been amended to clarify terminology set forth originally in the application as filed. Applicants attest that no new matter has been added thereto.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

2-3. Claims 1, 4, 5 and 7-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement.

The Examiner states that the “claim(s) contains subject matter that was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.” More specifically, the Examiner states that “the applicant is trying to incorporate that the shield is snap-fitted to the buffer.” In response, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 12 by deleting “said shield (40) is securely retained on said second end (33) of said buffer (30) by snap-fitting opposite lateral edges (41) of said shield (40) around said buffer (30)” and inserting “opposite lateral edges (41) of said shield (40) are folded around said second end (33) of said buffer (30) thereby fixedly securing said shield (40) to said buffer (30).” Applicants attest that no new matter has been added thereto.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, of claims 1, 4, 5 and 7-15 as failing to comply with the written description requirement be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

4-5. Claims 1, 4, 12, 13 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent 3,848,911 to Watermann et al. (“the ‘911 reference”) in view of U.S. Patent 3,997,202 to Tack et al. (“the ‘202 reference”) and further in view of U.S. Patent 4,130,308 to Jeavons (“the ‘308 patent”). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

The ‘911 reference discloses a motor-vehicle latch including a body 36 having an open notch 11 for receiving a bolt 12 secured to a motor-vehicle doorpost 30. The latch also includes a pair of ramps 9, 10 for guiding the bolt 12 along the open notch 11. The bolt 12 includes a bolt head 18 which comes to rest against an elastomeric cushion 17 provided at the base of the open notch 11 when the latch is in a latched position.

The ‘202 reference discloses a door-lock assembly including a body having lower 13 and upper 14 cheeks defining a wedge-receiving pocket 16 for receiving a locking wedge A. The locking wedge A includes a plate 32 having a smooth lower edge 32a. The lower cheek 13 is centrally recessed to accommodate an elastic buffer 31 overlain by a metallic yoke 30 whose lower ends have lugs 30a holding it in position within the recess. The yoke 30 projects slightly above the upper surface of the lower cheek 13 to bear upon the lower edge 32a of the plate 32 of the locking wedge A for more positive guidance as the plate 32 slides along the cheek 13. The locking wedge A comes to rest against an abutment 18 at one end of the pocket 16.

The ‘308 reference discloses a latch having a latch bolt 15 and a pawl 16 pivotally mounted to a housing 10. The latch bolt 15 is of generally U-shaped and includes a pair of arms 17 and 18 between which a shank 19 of the striker is located when the door is locked in its closed position. When the door is in its closed position, a portion 28 of a rubber block 21 is held in a compressed state.

Claim 1, as amended, includes the limitation of “a rigid protective shield (40) covering said second end (33) of said buffer (30) in an area of interaction with said engagement portion (3) of said lock striker (2) for evenly distributing said impact of said lock striker (2) over said second end (33) wherein opposite lateral edges (41) of said shield (40) are folded around

said second end (33) of said buffer (30) thereby fixedly securing said shield (40) to said buffer (30)."

None of the cited references disclose a shield (40) having opposite lateral edges (41) folded around a second end (33) of a buffer (30) thereby fixedly securing the shield (40) to the buffer (30), as required by amended claim 1 of the above-captioned application. In the '202 reference, the metallic yoke 30 is not fixedly secured to the buffer 31. The metallic yoke 30 retains the buffer 31 in a recess. The lower ends of the metallic yoke 30 have outwardly extending lugs 30a which are disposed in pockets within the recess for retaining the buffer 31 and yoke 30 in position within the recess.

Claim 4 depends from claim 1 and, as such, is construed to incorporate by reference all of the limitations of claim 1, *see* 35 U.S.C. § 112, fourth paragraph. Thus, claim 4 includes the limitation of a shield (40) having opposite lateral edges (41) that are folded around a second end (33) of a buffer (30) thereby fixedly securing the shield (40) to the buffer (30).

Claim 12, as amended, includes the limitation of "an elastically compliant buffer (30) including a first end (31) coupled to said bottom wall (12) by a projection (34) extending from said first end (31) and having opposite lateral edges (35) converging with respect to one another toward said first end (31) and disposed in a recess (17) formed in said bottom wall (12), opposite lateral surfaces (32) bearing upon said side walls (13), a second end (33) having a concave surface for receiving an impact from an engagement portion (3) of said lock striker (2) and delimiting said opening (5) in said direction (B) of relative coupling in order to define damped arrest of said lock striker (2), and a slot (36) disposed between said first end (31) and said second end (33) and extending transversely to said side walls (13)."

None of the cited references disclose a buffer (30) coupled to a bottom wall (12) of a lock (1) by a projection (34) extending from a first end (31) of the buffer (30) and having opposite lateral edges (35) converging with respect to one another toward the first end (31) and disposed in a recess (17) formed in the bottom wall (12), as required by amended claim 12 of the above-captioned application. In the '911 reference, a flat surface of the elastomeric cushion 17 is adjacent to a back wall 40 of the housing 1.

Claim 12, as amended, includes the further limitation of "a rigid protective shield (40) covering said second end (33) of said buffer (30) in an area of interaction with said engagement portion (3) of said lock striker (2) for evenly distributing said impact of said lock striker (2) over said second end (33) wherein opposite lateral edges (41) of said shield (40) are folded around said second end (33) of said buffer (30) thereby fixedly securing said shield (40) to said buffer (30)."

None of the cited references disclose a shield (40) having opposite lateral edges (41) folded around a second end (33) of a buffer (30) thereby fixedly securing the shield (40) to the buffer (30), as required by amended claim 12 of the above-captioned application. In the '202 reference, the metallic yoke 30 is not fixedly secured to the buffer 31. The metallic yoke 30 retains the buffer 31 in a recess. The lower ends of the metallic yoke 30 have outwardly extending lugs 30a which are disposed in pockets within the recess for retaining the buffer 31 and yoke 30 in position within the recess.

Claims 13 and 15 depend from claim 12 and, as such, are construed to incorporate by reference all of the limitations of claim 12, *see* 35 U.S.C. § 112, fourth paragraph. Thus, claims 13 and 15 include the limitation of a shield (40) having opposite lateral edges (41) that are folded around a second end (33) of a buffer (30) thereby fixedly securing the shield (40) to the buffer (30).

Furthermore, there is no teaching, suggestion, or motivation to combine the cited references in order to render the subject matter of the claims in the above-captioned application obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made. The '911 reference *already* discloses the elastomeric cushion 17 at the base of the open notch 11 for receiving an impact from the bolt 12. The '202 reference discloses the buffer 31 and metallic yoke 30 disposed in a recess in the lower cheek 13 such that the smooth lower edge 32a of the locking wedge A *slides* along the surface of the metallic yoke 30 to guide the locking wedge A within the pocket 16. Thus, the buffer 31 and metallic yoke 30 are not positioned at an end of the pocket 16 to receive an impact from the locking wedge A. Thus, Applicants cannot understand how one skilled in the art would have any motivation to combine the '202 reference

with the '911 reference. Moreover, the cited references themselves do not suggest such a combination.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of independent claim 1, and claim 4 depending therefrom, and independent claim 12, and claims 13 and 15 depending therefrom, as being unpatentable over the '911 reference in view of the '202 reference and further in view of the '308 reference be withdrawn.

6. Claims 1, 4, 12, 13 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over French Patent 2,786,524 to Dejean et al. ("the '524 reference") in view of the '202 reference and further in view of the '308 reference. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

The '524 reference discloses a lock having an open slot 1 for receiving a striker 2. The lock also includes a pair of ramps 10, 11 for guiding the striker 2 along the slot 1. The striker 2 comes to rest against a wedge 30 provided at the end of the slot 1 when the lock is in a latched position. The disclosures of the '202 reference and the '308 reference are set forth above.

Claim 1, as amended, includes the limitation of "a rigid protective shield (40) covering said second end (33) of said buffer (30) in an area of interaction with said engagement portion (3) of said lock striker (2) for evenly distributing said impact of said lock striker (2) over said second end (33) wherein opposite lateral edges (41) of said shield (40) are folded around said second end (33) of said buffer (30) thereby fixedly securing said shield (40) to said buffer (30)."

None of the cited references disclose a shield (40) having opposite lateral edges (41) folded around a second end (33) of a buffer (30) thereby fixedly securing the shield (40) to the buffer (30), as required by amended claim 1 of the above-captioned application. In the '202 reference, the metallic yoke 30 is not fixedly secured to the buffer 31. The metallic yoke 30 retains the buffer 31 in a recess. The lower ends of the metallic yoke 30 have outwardly extending lugs 30a which are disposed in pockets within the recess for retaining the buffer 31 and yoke 30 in position within the recess.

Claim 4 depends from claim 1 and, as such, is construed to incorporate by reference all of the limitations of claim 1, *see* 35 U.S.C. § 112, fourth paragraph. Thus, claim 4 includes the limitation of a shield (40) having opposite lateral edges (41) that are folded around a second end (33) of a buffer (30) thereby fixedly securing the shield (40) to the buffer (30).

Claim 12, as amended, includes the limitation of “an elastically compliant buffer (30) including a first end (31) coupled to said bottom wall (12) by a projection (34) extending from said first end (31) and having opposite lateral edges (35) converging with respect to one another toward said first end (31) and disposed in a recess (17) formed in said bottom wall (12), opposite lateral surfaces (32) bearing upon said side walls (13), a second end (33) having a concave surface for receiving an impact from an engagement portion (3) of said lock striker (2) and delimiting said opening (5) in said direction (B) of relative coupling in order to define damped arrest of said lock striker (2), and a slot (36) disposed between said first end (31) and said second end (33) and extending transversely to said side walls (13).”

None of the cited references disclose a buffer (30) coupled to a bottom wall (12) of a lock (1) by a projection (34) extending from a first end (31) of the buffer (30) and having opposite lateral edges (35) converging with respect to one another toward the first end (31) and disposed in a recess (17) formed in the bottom wall (12), as required by amended claim 12 of the above-captioned application. In the '911 reference, a flat surface of the elastomeric cushion 17 is adjacent to a back wall 40 of the housing 1.

Claim 12, as amended, includes the further limitation of “a rigid protective shield (40) covering said second end (33) of said buffer (30) in an area of interaction with said engagement portion (3) of said lock striker (2) for evenly distributing said impact of said lock striker (2) over said second end (33) wherein opposite lateral edges (41) of said shield (40) are folded around said second end (33) of said buffer (30) thereby fixedly securing said shield (40) to said buffer (30).”

None of the cited references disclose a shield (40) having opposite lateral edges (41) folded around a second end (33) of a buffer (30) thereby fixedly securing the shield (40) to the buffer (30), as required by amended claim 12 of the above-captioned

application: In the '202 reference, the metallic yoke 30 is not fixedly secured to the buffer 31. The metallic yoke 30 retains the buffer 31 in a recess. The lower ends of the metallic yoke 30 have outwardly extending lugs 30a which are disposed in pockets within the recess for retaining the buffer 31 and yoke 30 in position within the recess.

Claims 13 and 15 depend from claim 12 and, as such, are construed to incorporate by reference all of the limitations of claim 12, *see* 35 U.S.C. § 112, fourth paragraph. Thus, claims 13 and 15 include the limitation of a shield (40) having opposite lateral edges (41) that are folded around a second end (33) of a buffer (30) thereby fixedly securing the shield (40) to the buffer (30).

Furthermore, there is no teaching, suggestion, or motivation to combine the cited references in order to render the subject matter of the claims in the above-captioned application obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made. The '911 reference *already* discloses the elastomeric cushion 17 at the base of the open notch 11 for receiving an impact from the bolt 12. The '202 reference discloses the buffer 31 and metallic yoke 30 disposed in a recess in the lower cheek 13 such that the smooth lower edge 32a of the locking wedge A *slides* along the surface of the metallic yoke 30 to guide the locking wedge A within the pocket 16. Thus, the buffer 31 and metallic yoke 30 are not positioned at an end of the pocket 16 to receive an impact from the locking wedge A. Thus, Applicants cannot understand how one skilled in the art would have any motivation to combine the '202 reference with the '911 reference. Moreover, the cited references themselves do not suggest such a combination.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of independent claim 1, and claim 4 depending therefrom, and independent claim 12, and claims 13 and 15 depending therefrom, as being unpatentable over the '524 reference in view of the '202 reference and further in view of the '308 reference be withdrawn.

7. Claims 8 and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '911 reference in view of the '202 reference and further in view of the '308 reference as

applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Japanese Patent 02176084 ("the '084 reference"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 8 and 9 depend from claim 1 and, as such, are construed to incorporate by reference all of the limitations of claim 1, *see* 35 U.S.C. § 112, fourth paragraph. Thus, claims 8 and 9 include the limitation of a shield (40) having opposite lateral edges (41) that are folded around a second end (33) of a buffer (30) thereby fixedly securing the shield (40) to the buffer (30).

None of the cited references disclose a shield having opposite lateral edges that are folded around a second end of a buffer thereby fixedly securing the shield to the buffer, as required by amended claim 1 of the above captioned application. Furthermore, there is no teaching, suggestion, or motivation to combine the cited references in order to render the subject matter of the claims in the above-captioned application obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made. The '911 reference *already* discloses the elastomeric cushion 17 at the base of the open notch 11 for receiving an impact from the bolt 12. The '202 reference discloses the buffer 31 and metallic yoke 30 disposed in a recess in the lower cheek 13 such that the smooth lower edge 32a of the locking wedge A *slides* along the surface of the metallic yoke 30 to guide the locking wedge A within the pocket 16. Thus, the buffer 31 and metallic yoke 30 are not positioned at an end of the pocket 16 to receive an impact from the locking wedge A. Thus, Applicants cannot understand how one skilled in the art would have any motivation to combine the '202 reference with the '911 reference. Moreover, the cited references themselves do not suggest such a combination.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of claims 8 and 9 as being unpatentable over the '911 reference in view of the '202 reference and further in view of the '308 reference as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of '084 reference be withdrawn.

8. Claims 8-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '524 reference in view of the '202 reference and further in view of the '308 reference as applied

to claim 1 above, and further in view of the '084 reference. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 8-10 depend from claim 1 and, as such, are construed to incorporate by reference all of the limitations of claim 1, *see* 35 U.S.C. § 112, fourth paragraph. Thus, claims 8-10 include the limitation of a shield (40) having opposite lateral edges (41) that are folded around a second end (33) of a buffer (30) thereby fixedly securing the shield (40) to the buffer (30).

None of the cited references disclose a shield having opposite lateral edges that are folded around a second end of a buffer thereby fixedly securing the shield to the buffer, as required by amended claim 1 of the above captioned application. Furthermore, there is no teaching, suggestion, or motivation to combine the cited references in order to render the subject matter of the claims in the above-captioned application obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made. The '911 reference *already* discloses the elastomeric cushion 17 at the base of the open notch 11 for receiving an impact from the bolt 12. The '202 reference discloses the buffer 31 and metallic yoke 30 disposed in a recess in the lower cheek 13 such that the smooth lower edge 32a of the locking wedge A *slides* along the surface of the metallic yoke 30 to guide the locking wedge A within the pocket 16. Thus, the buffer 31 and metallic yoke 30 are not positioned at an end of the pocket 16 to receive an impact from the locking wedge A. Thus, Applicants cannot understand how one skilled in the art would have any motivation to combine the '202 reference with the '911 reference. Moreover, the cited references themselves do not suggest such a combination.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of claims 8-10 as being unpatentable over the '524 reference in view of the '202 reference and further in view of the '308 reference as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of the '084 reference be withdrawn.

9. Claims 5 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '524 reference in view of the '202 reference, the '308 reference, and in view of the '084 reference as applied to claim 10 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,727,825 to Spurr ("the '825 reference"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 5 and 11 depend from claim 1 and, as such, are construed to incorporate by reference all of the limitations of claim 1, *see* 35 U.S.C. § 112, fourth paragraph. Thus, claims 5 and 11 include the limitation of a shield (40) having opposite lateral edges (41) that are folded around a second end (33) of a buffer (30) thereby fixedly securing the shield (40) to the buffer (30).

None of the cited references disclose a shield having opposite lateral edges that are folded around a second end of a buffer thereby fixedly securing the shield to the buffer, as required by amended claim 1 of the above captioned application. Furthermore, there is no teaching, suggestion, or motivation to combine the cited references in order to render the subject matter of the claims in the above-captioned application obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made. The '911 reference *already* discloses the elastomeric cushion 17 at the base of the open notch 11 for receiving an impact from the bolt 12. The '202 reference discloses the buffer 31 and metallic yoke 30 disposed in a recess in the lower cheek 13 such that the smooth lower edge 32a of the locking wedge A *slides* along the surface of the metallic yoke 30 to guide the locking wedge A within the pocket 16. Thus, the buffer 31 and metallic yoke 30 are not positioned at an end of the pocket 16 to receive an impact from the locking wedge A. Thus, Applicants cannot understand how one skilled in the art would have any motivation to combine the '202 reference with the '911 reference. Moreover, the cited references themselves do not suggest such a combination.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of claims 5 and 11 as being unpatentable over the '524 reference in view of the '202 reference, the '308 reference, and in view of the '084 reference as applied to claim 10 above, and further in view of '825 reference be withdrawn.

10. Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '524 reference in view of the '202 reference, the '308 reference, the '084 reference, and in view of the '825 reference as applied to claim 5 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,348,355 to Oyha ("the '355 reference"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 7 depends from claim 1 and, as such, is construed to incorporate by reference all of the limitations of claim 1, *see* 35 U.S.C. § 112, fourth paragraph. Thus, claim 7 includes the limitation of a shield (40) having opposite lateral edges (41) that are folded around a second end (33) of a buffer (30) thereby fixedly securing the shield (40) to the buffer (30).

None of the cited references disclose a shield having opposite lateral edges that are folded around a second end of a buffer thereby fixedly securing the shield to the buffer, as required by amended claim 1 of the above captioned application. Furthermore, there is no teaching, suggestion, or motivation to combine the cited references in order to render the subject matter of the claims in the above-captioned application obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made. The '911 reference *already* discloses the elastomeric cushion 17 at the base of the open notch 11 for receiving an impact from the bolt 12. The '202 reference discloses the buffer 31 and metallic yoke 30 disposed in a recess in the lower cheek 13 such that the smooth lower edge 32a of the locking wedge A *slides* along the surface of the metallic yoke 30 to guide the locking wedge A within the pocket 16. Thus, the buffer 31 and metallic yoke 30 are not positioned at an end of the pocket 16 to receive an impact from the locking wedge A. Thus, Applicants cannot understand how one skilled in the art would have any motivation to combine the '202 reference with the '911 reference. Moreover, the cited references themselves do not suggest such a combination.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of claim 7 as being unpatentable over the '524 reference in view of the '202 reference, the '308 reference, the '084 reference, and in view of the '825 reference as applied to claim 5 above, and further in view of the '355 reference be withdrawn.

11. Claim 14 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '911 reference in view of the '202 reference, and further in view of the '308 reference as applied to claim 12 above, and further in view of the '355 reference. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 14 depends from claim 12 and, as such, is construed to incorporate by reference all of the limitations of claim 12, *see* 35 U.S.C. § 112, fourth paragraph. Thus, claim

14 includes the limitation of a shield (40) having opposite lateral edges (41) that are folded around a second end (33) of a buffer (30) thereby fixedly securing the shield (40) to the buffer (30).

None of the cited references disclose a shield having opposite lateral edges that are folded around a second end of a buffer thereby fixedly securing the shield to the buffer, as required by amended claim 1 of the above captioned application. Furthermore, there is no teaching, suggestion, or motivation to combine the cited references in order to render the subject matter of the claims in the above-captioned application obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made. The '911 reference *already* discloses the elastomeric cushion 17 at the base of the open notch 11 for receiving an impact from the bolt 12. The '202 reference discloses the buffer 31 and metallic yoke 30 disposed in a recess in the lower cheek 13 such that the smooth lower edge 32a of the locking wedge A *slides* along the surface of the metallic yoke 30 to guide the locking wedge A within the pocket 16. Thus, the buffer 31 and metallic yoke 30 are not positioned at an end of the pocket 16 to receive an impact from the locking wedge A. Thus, Applicants cannot understand how one skilled in the art would have any motivation to combine the '202 reference with the '911 reference. Moreover, the cited references themselves do not suggest such a combination.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of claim 14 as being unpatentable over the '911 reference in view of the '202 reference, and further in view of the '308 reference as applied to claim 12 above, and further in view of the '355 reference be withdrawn.

12. Claim 14 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '524 reference in view of the '202 reference, and further in view of the '308 reference as applied to claim 12 above, and further in view of the '355 reference. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 14 depends from claim 12 and, as such, is construed to incorporate by reference all of the limitations of claim 12, *see* 35 U.S.C. § 112, fourth paragraph. Thus, claim 14 includes the limitation of a shield (40) having opposite lateral edges (41) that are folded

around a second end (33) of a buffer (30) thereby fixedly securing the shield (40) to the buffer (30).

None of the cited references disclose a shield having opposite lateral edges that are folded around a second end of a buffer thereby fixedly securing the shield to the buffer, as required by amended claim 1 of the above captioned application. Furthermore, there is no teaching, suggestion, or motivation to combine the cited references in order to render the subject matter of the claims in the above-captioned application obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made. The '911 reference *already* discloses the elastomeric cushion 17 at the base of the open notch 11 for receiving an impact from the bolt 12. The '202 reference discloses the buffer 31 and metallic yoke 30 disposed in a recess in the lower cheek 13 such that the smooth lower edge 32a of the locking wedge A *slides* along the surface of the metallic yoke 30 to guide the locking wedge A within the pocket 16. Thus, the buffer 31 and metallic yoke 30 are not positioned at an end of the pocket 16 to receive an impact from the locking wedge A. Thus, Applicants cannot understand how one skilled in the art would have any motivation to combine the '202 reference with the '911 reference. Moreover, the cited references themselves do not suggest such a combination.

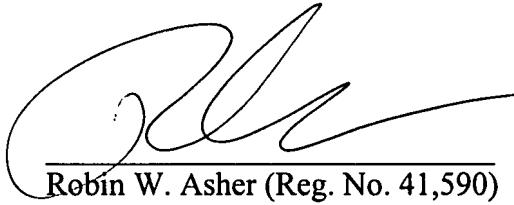
Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of claim 14 as being unpatentable over the '524 reference in view of the '202 reference, and further in view of the '308 reference as applied to claim 12 above, and further in view of the '355 reference be withdrawn.

Appl'n No: 10/517,955
Amdt dated June 27, 2007
Reply to Office action of March 27, 2007

It is respectfully submitted that this patent application is in condition for allowance, which allowance is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this amendment or the patent application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee associated with this Communication to Deposit Account No. 50-1759. A duplicate of this form is attached.

Respectfully submitted,



Robin W. Asher (Reg. No. 41,590)
Clark Hill PLC
500 Woodward Avenue, Suite 3500
Detroit, MI 48226-3435
(313) 965-8300

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